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ABSTRACT

Four dimensions that must be present for a group to function effectively are elaborated in this guide: (1) commitment of members to a common purpose; (2) leadership that facilitates organization and structuring to accomplish these purposes; (3) open communication among members; and (4) a climate of acceptance and trust. Defining a group as any number of people who are thought of together and who are jointly in pursuit of a common goal, the author's observations are applicable to any context, but are directed more specifically toward school and student groups. He outlines four stages of group development ("groping, griping, grasping, and grouping"), discusses different leadership styles and their impact on group development and behavior, describes group decision-making processes, deals briefly with handling group conflict, and discusses some of the ways in which groups meet members' needs. (Author/DS)

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GROUP DYNAMICS FOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Russell D. Robinson

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Foreword

In recent years energy supply and use have occupied national and international attention. In focusing on the physical aspects of the problem we sometimes overlook the most important feature of energy—people. This monograph deals with dynamism as it affects people, particularly young people.

Group activity is a vital part of our lives. Whether it is a frustrating or a rewarding experience is, in large part, up to us. By providing insight into how and why groups are formed, this NASSP publication should enable students to work more effectively for and within their organizations.

Russell Robinson explains that a group is not just a mass of people in the same place at the same time; rather, it is a number of people working together toward a common goal.

Why is it that some groups flourish while others falter? How can you prevent your organization from erupting into conflict that splits the group from within, or, even minimally, produces unnecessary tension? The material presented by the author should answer your questions and enable you to help your group function more effectively. We commend *Group Dynamics* to all who are privileged to work with and for youth.

Owen B. Kiernan
Executive Director
NASSP

I Group Dynamics:
what makes a group

We spend much of our lives in groups. Some are formal groups with clearly stated purposes and well-thought-out means for achieving those purposes. Some are formally organized but for one reason or another don't seem to get anything accomplished. Others are informal groups with no attempt at formal organization at all, yet they meet particular social needs.

Examples of all these groups can be found in the school. Some function well; some limp along; some fail. Some may be elaborately organized, such as a student council or a chapter of a national group with a constitution and bylaws, rituals and procedures, and systems of member representation. Others may have only the barest written rules. Some school groups exist for long periods of time—5, 10, 15, 20 or more years—with histories and traditions. Others have short lives (e.g., an ad hoc committee), and dissolve when the initial purpose is achieved.

But whether it is a student council or a pep club, a chapter of the Future Homemakers of America or a chess club, an organization with a long history or a committtee with a specific assignment, groups have certain characteristics in common. A distinction must be made between a real group and a

collection of people who happen to be at the same place at the same time, such as those waiting for a bus, sitting in a theater, or standing in an elevator. A group, as we are using the word here, is any number of people, large or small, who are thought of together and who are jointly in pursuit of a common goal.

What makes a group

At least four requirements must be present for the formation of a group, and subsequent chapters will expand on each of these factors. No requirement is "more important" than another. Each must be present in some degree for a stable group, and each must be present to a greater degree for an effective group.

One of these factors is *purpose*. A group must have a reason for being, a common shared goal. It may be formally stated or informally understood. Common purpose is what motivates a group. In effective groups goals are selected, known, and understood by members whose interest and motivation is directed to those ends. Members of effective groups feel progress is being made toward achievement of those purposes.

A second factor is *leadership*. Groups must be organized or structured in such a way that responsibilities are shared by group members. In effective groups members willingly accept some degree of interdependence and control; their roles are sufficiently differentiated and understood so that each feels an important part of the whole structure. Organizational structures may be elaborate and complex or informal and simple, as long as leadership is sufficient to accomplish the purposes of the group and keep the group together in the process.

Communication is another factor in the formation of a group. Without acceptable means of communication between members, groups cannot survive or accomplish their purposes. Communication is the connector that links members together and provides for the flow and exchange of ideas. In effective groups communication permits persons to freely share their hopes, beliefs, and knowledge in such a way as to reach common understandings. Even frustrations may be expressed without breaking up the group.

The fourth factor requisite for a group is *acceptance*. Group members must accept each other. Minimally, each member

must accept every other member's right to be in the group and to share in the group's functioning. In an effective group, members feel secure; they feel wanted and needed. They "miss the group" when not there, and the group "misses" them. They trust their fellow members. They are able to accept the other members and they know that they also are accepted.

Groups often fall short of fulfilling the optimum conditions for effectiveness. Herein are the roots of most problems in group functioning. Also in these four factors are the keys to whatever success a group achieves. Your particular group may not have yet achieved the optimum conditions for all four factors. Few groups do.

One of the mistakes commonly made by group leaders is to assume that only two of these four factors are necessary for the functioning of a group. Leaders sometimes believe that if the goals and purposes are clear and well established and the group is sufficiently structured and organized success is guaranteed. This is rarely true. Unless group members also accept each other and are able to communicate, the group will just get by, at best, or may even disband in a climate of bickering or disinterest.

Successful group dynamics is the play and interplay of these four factors:

1. The degree to which members understand and are committed to a common purpose;
2. The degree that leadership facilitates organization and structuring to accomplish those purposes;
3. The degree to which members can communicate openly and honestly with each other; and,
4. The climate of acceptance and trust that prevails in the group.

Group development

Just as a young person goes through stages of development in the process of growth, so a group goes through stages in the process of reaching whatever degree of acceptance, communication, leadership, and purpose it achieves. This process in a group may take a long time (several meetings or months) or may be achieved in one or two meetings. But development always takes time. In general, the less well people know each

other, and the more people there are in the group, the longer the development process takes.

The four "G's"

For ease in remembering these stages of group development let's call them groping, griping, grasping, and grouping. Although these stages tend to be sequential, this is not always true; nor, for that matter, are all stages always found in all groups under all conditions. Each group growth and development pattern is unique. Here again is the analogy to human growth with its many variations within an overall pattern.

The first stage of a new group may be called the *groping stage*. Each person attempts to meet his own individual needs. Behavior is more or less "individual-centered." Each person is trying to find the answer to the questions, "What's here for me?" "What do the others think of me?" "How will I fit in?" "Will they listen to me?" "I wonder if this is worth my time?" There is, consequently, a good deal of "testing" behavior, somewhat the way one would test the temperature of a lake before diving in. Some test by talking and checking out the response being received. In this test-talk one is careful not to reveal too much, or to lay oneself open to attack or rejection. The talk is confined to what is "safe." Meanwhile, others in the group don't talk at all, or talk very little. They test by "lying back in the weeds," watching and listening to what happens in the group.

Both types, the talkers and the quiet ones, are testing the situation, checking it out for safety. Each individual is trying to find his place in the group. Sometimes, to an observer, it will seem as if no one is really responding to anyone else. There is often lack of understanding. It's all part of groping behavior, similar to carefully checking out a dark cave before deciding it's safe.

With all this individual-centered groping behavior, members begin to get a feeling of discouragement and discomfort. The group is now moving into the *griping stage*. This is a period often characterized by high levels of frustration and conflict. Earlier, persons were trying to find their places in the group, hence the testing behavior. Now they begin to respond to the messages. They may find it difficult to adjust to the places others have assigned to them or they have found for themselves. So there is a jockeying for power, a struggle for control.

The question is, "Who's going to run this group?" and the answer is, "Not him," or "Not her, if I can help it!" So the frustration builds, the power struggle deepens, and discouragement mounts. Sometimes the power plays are overt and accompanied by selection of allies. But often they are covert and accompanied by polite talk and intellectual "one-upmanship."

In any case, the griping, frustrating, conflict-ridden situation cannot remain or the group will dissolve or break apart. Therefore certain group members begin to behave in ways that dampen the conflict and harmonize the divergent viewpoints. The group begins to move to the *grasping stage*; that is, it begins to grasp some sense of "groupness."

The "we-centered" people in the group who are concerned with the group's purpose and service to members behave in ways that bring under some control the "I-centered" forces that dominated the groping and griping stages. Efforts are made toward group consolidation. Compromises are fostered between divergent points of view. Some degree of organization is agreed upon. Some common agreement is arrived at concerning task and goal. Some rules and patterns for communication are established; i.e., only one talks at a time, listens to what the other person says, etc.

Members then begin to accept each other and become more comfortable with their emerging place in the group. They have grasped the idea of "a group" and the work of the group has begun.

The final *grouping stage* is a further extension of what began in the grasping stage. Members develop a clearer sense of purpose, a deeper feeling of group-centeredness, and they learn to work together. They think of themselves as a group.

Group patterns once established attempt to persist even while responding to internal factors (changes going on within the group) or external factors (forces acting on the group from the outside).

However, when a person who has been active in a group leaves, the group changes. The group has to account for that absence and will respond or change to some extent as a consequence. Likewise, when a new person (or persons) comes into the group, the group has to find a place for the newcomer(s). The group may even revert to an earlier stage of development (perhaps all the way back to groping and griping again) until

the new people are integrated into the group. This is one of the reasons groups often don't really "want" new members.

But even if group membership remains the same, group members change as a consequence of forces outside the group itself and this has an impact on the group. A member who has been active in the club gets a job after school so he becomes much less active. A family situation so troubles a member that his behavior is substantially "different" at meetings. The group has to take into account and adjust to the different members' behavior.

Groups are dynamic, always changing, a little or a lot, depending on internal and external forces. They often repeat to some extent the stages of groping, griping, grasping and grouping as the group strives to maintain itself, maintain its own unique sense of groupness with its own peculiar characteristics.

Group characteristics

As one would expect, the characteristics of any group depend largely on the individuals who make up the group. But that is only part of the story. As the members of the group continue to interact, a group actually begins to assume a personality of its own. And this "group personality"—unique to that group—will tend to remain over time, even as membership changes. We refer to these persisting tendencies as group characteristics.

Think about the several groups to which you belong. Aren't they "different"? What about your behavior in one group as compared to another? Is that behavior "different"? Your perceptions of each group and your behavior in each may vary considerably. In fact, it would be unusual if that were not the case.

So each group is unique in its characteristics. Take *atmosphere*, a characteristic referring to the degree of permissive and friendly feeling in the group. Some groups have a high degree of informality; the atmosphere is warm and accepting and members feel free to speak when they have something to say.In contrast, other groups have a very formal, almost forbidding atmosphere and may seem cold or indifferent. Sometimes the group atmosphere may be so tense that the slightest spark will cause an explosion, or there may be a great deal of

hostility. Groups may actually be studied or compared on the basis of the prevailing group climate.

Another group characteristic involves *communication patterns*. What group members feel they can or cannot say, how they say it, and the effect what is said has on other group members may vary considerably from group to group. Certain members may be accorded greater communication privileges by the group and what they say will carry more weight. Some in the group may say little or nothing, convinced that what they say will not count, or that someone else will express their ideas better than they can.

Likewise, groups can be studied in terms of *participation patterns* which develop. For some group members, participation may be intense and active. Others may participate very little (perhaps not come to the meetings very often). People participate and interact with one another in many different ways. Participation is usually described in terms of the amount and direction of communications and the ratio of listeners to talkers.

Leadership patterns is another characteristic which will vary among groups. In fact, every group develops its own unique leadership patterns. These patterns often continue when members, youth leaders, and adult advisers change. How leaders are elected, designated, or appointed will follow established procedures. How leaders function in making decisions may range from essentially authoritarian leadership styles to democratic patterns.

Cohesiveness also varies considerably from group to group. This is the characteristic that describes how well a group sticks together, how much each member feels a part of and essential to the whole group. It relates closely to how well the group functions in a crisis situation.

Every group of more than eight members is likely to have *subgroups*. These subgroups or cliques are a normal development, a consequence of how many persons one can relate to with any degree of intensity at one time. Subgroups may be formed on the basis of friendships, common agreement and interests, or even opposition to the direction of the group. These cliques can be constructive, forwarding group progress, or destructive, thwarting group activity.

Groups also vary in their standards, the degree of uniformity required to carry out their work, and the methods

established for working together. Groups demand the individual adjust his behavior to certain standards acceptable to the members of the group.

Likewise, groups will vary in terms of their *history*, their *traditions* and *policies*, and their particular *structure*. And of course, there are major variations among groups in terms of their *programs and purposes*.

In spite of the wide variations in characteristics among groups, several factors remain necessary for any effective group. Subsequent chapters will develop these factors in more detail.

II Effective Leadership:
what keeps a group going

Leadership is viewed in many different ways. At one time it was considered primarily a personality trait inherent in a leader. Leadership was regarded as "natural." In fact, thousands of studies were made of leadership on just such an assumption. If possession of certain personality traits were synonymous with leadership ability, one could identify such traits, develop a psychological test to determine their presence, and elect or appoint only those who would be guaranteed successes as leaders! But no such predictive traits were identified in spite of the efforts, and research in this direction has been largely abandoned.

However, there are still lists of "qualities of a leader" in most books on leadership. The qualities listed are desirable and we can strive to express them, but their usefulness for studying leadership appears limited.

Researchers have also viewed leadership as a phenomena inherent in the position one occupies. The authority, power, or influence that goes with a position confers leadership on the one who occupies it. To some extent, of course, this is true, but it is hardly the whole story. The fact that a particular person who occupies a given position (say, president of a science club) may be very ineffective compared to the person who occupied that position last year suggests strongly that more than a designated position is necessary for leadership.

Another much more useful way to look at leadership is as a property of the group. It describes particular functions or behaviors that help the group and are carried on by any member at any point in time.

Functional leadership roles

Much of the research in recent years has focused on the functional view of leadership. In study after study, behaviors were observed and cataloged as "leadership behaviors." Hundreds of specific behaviors were identified. It soon became apparent that these behaviors fell into two large categories: those behaviors concerned primarily with group maintenance and those concerned primarily with goal attainment or task accomplishment.

Group maintenance involves those behaviors aimed at keeping relationships pleasant, encouraging others, maintaining trust, respect, and warmth—all those behaviors that make people feel comfortable and satisfied with group membership.

Goal attainment behaviors, on the other hand, involve all those behaviors concerned with accomplishing particular tasks, initiating action, clarifying issues and developing plans—all those behaviors aimed at accomplishing group purposes.

Both kinds of behaviors are requisite in the group because both function to meet the needs of members in attaining goals and providing a sense of belonging. The positional or designated leader (the officer)is not the only person in the group performing these leadership roles. Every member, to some degree, is contributing in ways that keep the group together or accomplish common purposes. The role of any officer is important, but the officer is hardly the only leader. The functional concept of leadership illustrates that all group members have a shared responsibility to carry out various leadership functions. It suggests that the designated leader has a responsibility to facilitate the performance of leadership roles by all members of the group. Each member then brings to the group his particular abilities in group maintenance and goal attainment. How well members perform leadership behaviors in a group determines how well the group functions as a whole.

Types of leadership roles

Added to the two dimensions of leadership mentioned is a third: desire to lead. This is also a factor in one's willingness to accept and carry out positional leadership assignments in a group. The desire to be "it," to play a leading part, to accept election to office or appointment as committee chairman is necessary to effectively carry out the duties of any office or leadership responsibility.

Desire to Lead	Task Ability	Social Ability	
Hi	Hi	Hi	The Ideal Leader
Hi	Hi	Lo	The Task-Oriented Leader
Hi	Lo	Hi	The Human Relations-Oriented Leader
Lo	Hi	Hi	The Ideal Member
Lo	Hi	Lo	The Task-Oriented Member
Lo	Lo	Hi	The Human Relations-Oriented Member
Hi	Lo	Lo	The Problem "Would-Be" Leader
Lo	Lo	Lo	The Indifferent Member

We now have three dimensions of leadership: willingness to lead; ability to accomplish the tasks and achieve the goals of the group; and ability to establish and maintain cordial and socially satisfying relationships in the group. To simplify matters, let's call these desire to lead, task ability, and social ability. One might classify members in a group in terms of their leadership inclinations and contributions as follows:

The Ideal Leader. This person is high in desire to lead, high in task ability, high in social ability. This is the kind of leader we all wish to be. The ideal leader is willing to accept responsibility and is competent in both task and human relations skills. Unfortunately, this person is relatively rare.

The Task-Oriented Leader. This person rates high in desire to lead and high in task ability but relatively low in social ability. This is the most common type of leader in clubs and organizations. The individual wants to be leader and has

demonstrated competence by working in the group. This person knows what needs to be done to accomplish the goals of the group, and is willing to do it. However, the individual's social skills are not as well developed. He often makes excuses for this shortcoming with such comments as, "Well, you can't please everyone," or, "You can't climb the ladder of success without stepping on someone." This leader would benefit from human relations training.

The Human Relations-Oriented Leader. This person rates high in desire to lead, high in social ability, but relatively low in task ability. These persons are "popular" and may be elected, or appointed, because they are "nice guys" or "neat girls." They are willing to lead but don't have the know-how to organize to accomplish the goals of the group. While group members may be very happy with these leaders when they first assume a position, members soon become disillusioned and unhappy with the lack of task accomplishment. This leader would benefit from organization and management training.

Membership roles

The Ideal Member is low in desire to lead, high in task ability, and high in social ability. Here is the kind of member who is every officer's dream; a member competent in helping the group accomplish its goals and at the same time competent in human relations skills—and who doesn't want the leader's job.

The Task-Oriented Member is low in desire to lead, high in task ability,and low in social ability. Here is a good worker, committed to the purposes of the group, anxious and willing to get jobs done. However, his somewhat low competence in social skills may lead to problems with members who don't want to be pushed. But these task-oriented members are good workers and go-getters. When a task-oriented member is teamed with a human relations-oriented leader, he provides invaluable help with agenda, goals, and tasks, thus complementing the human relations-oriented leader's social skills.

The Human Relations-Oriented Member is low in desire to lead, low in task ability, and high in social ability. These are the people who enjoy being members, who enjoy each other's company, who like belonging to the group. They are sensitive

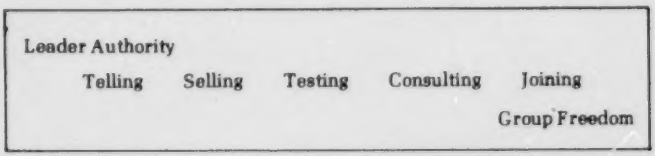
to changes in group morale and try to harmonize conflict when it threatens the group. When a task-oriented leader is linked with a member like this he has an important ally to function as his eyes, ears, and heart to provide human relations information that he might not otherwise receive.

The Problem "Would-Be" Leader. This person is high in desire to lead but low in task and social ability. This member spells "trouble." He wants to assume a position of leadership but is not able to function usefully due to lack of leadership skills. This individual needs help and may benefit by special training to learn and develop the necessary skills for success in his attempts to lead.

The Indifferent Member. This person is low in desire to lead and low in task and social ability. This is the member who just isn't excited about the group or his part in it. He may attend meetings sporadically, participate very little, and can't be counted on to do even the task he accepts. These members are usually blamed by the group for what happens or doesn't happen. "If it weren't for them, we. . . ," the others say, making the indifferent members their scapegoats.

Leadership styles

Much of the early leadership investigation looked at three leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. While this distinction was useful in early research, it is less helpful for today's practicing leaders because leaders tend to see themselves as "democratic" no matter what their style. (What leader would want to admit he is either acting like a dictator or not really functioning at all?)



It is more helpful to consider leadership styles as a continuum with many styles between the extremes of authoritarian and laissez-faire. Five such leadership styles may be identified: telling, selling, testing, consulting, and joining.

Telling. Here the leader exercises his authority and leaves the group virtually no freedom in making decisions. The leader

identifies a problem, considers alternative solutions, chooses one of them, and then tells the group members what they are to do. In his deliberations he may consider what he believes the group members will think or feel about the decision, but then again he may not. In any case, members clearly do not participate in the decision making.

Selling. The leader makes the decision without consulting the group members. But instead of simply announcing his decision, he tries to persuade the group members to accept it. He points out how he has considered the group goals and interests of group members; he will often emphasize how members will benefit from carrying out his decision. His job is to convince the members to support the decision he has made. His very attempt to sell, however, suggests recognition that the group has some freedom to turn down the decision, or at least the power to make it not work.

Testing. This is the leadership style usually meant when the term "democratic" is used. It is a 50-50 proposition; the leader has 50 percent authority and the group has 50 percent freedom. The leader may use any of three styles:

- He may present the decision and willingly ask for questions.
- He may present a tentative idea, subject to change and modification of the group.
- He may present several alternatives and let the group decide. Each style is "more democratic" than the preceding as the group's freedom to influence the decision is increased.

The important thing is that the leader tests his ideas with the group to get their reactions. He usually modifies or changes his ideas as a result. He may say, in effect, "I'd like your frank reactions to this proposal, and I will then make the final decision," or he may say, "These are some ideas that I have considered—what shall we do?"

Consulting. This leadership style involves the group in the decision from the beginning. The leader presents the problem and relevant background information, then asks the members for their ideas on how to solve it. The group is invited to suggest the range of alternative actions that might be considered, and the group and the leader together select the solution that seems most promising.

Joining. In this leadership style, the leader acts as a "convener" to call the group together, but behaves as "just another member." He agrees in advance to support and carry out any decision the group makes. The only limits placed on the group are those given to the leader by his superiors.

Life as the leader would be simple if it were just a matter of choosing a preferred leadership style. But leadership style is a result of several forces that become powerful determinants of behavior as a leader. These include forces in the leader, the membership of the group, and the situation.

Forces in the leader that affect the style he chooses include his value system (what he thinks is good or important), his confidence in the group members (whether he thinks they can decide), his leadership inclinations (the kind of leader he sees himself as), and his feelings of security or insecurity in an uncertain situation.

But there are also forces from within the membership pressuring the leader to behave in a certain way. Group members have definite notions of the kind of leader one should be and what they should do as members. This force molds the leader to fit their expectations. Members' needs for dependence or independence also affect one's leadership style. The members may "need" the leader to tell them his decision or prefer to decide themselves.

Members vary in how much ambiguity they can accept during a period of uncertainty when decisions are being made by the group. They also vary in their interest in the problems and their ability to understand and identify goals. And, of course, groups will vary in their knowledge and ability to deal with any particular problem or experience in making decisions themselves. Groups, like individuals, learn to make decisions by making decisions; they learn by practice.

Also affecting the leadership style selected are the forces within the situation. A school club or activity must conform to school policies. If affiliated with a national or state organization there are traditions and particular procedures required.

Another force is the group's sense of groupness; that is, the more cohesive and mutually accepting the membership and the more commonality of purpose, the stronger the group will be. The nature or complexity of the problem under discussion or the decision to be made may also be a situational factor, as well as the knowledge and experience of the group

in dealing with the problem. Often the most powerful situational force is the pressure of time. If there is need (real or imagined) for an immediate decision, this becomes a factor affecting the style a leader chooses.

Duties and responsibilities

Regardless of the leadership style used by the officers or leaders, the group must have some structure to survive. All formal groups are structured, usually with a set of officers and defined responsibilities for each. Even the most informal group is structured by common agreement.

Whether the organizational structure is written or unwritten, mutual understanding of it and the roles each will play (who does what) in that structure is vital to the continued health of the group. Most formal groups are structured with a president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer. Often the secretary and treasurer are separate offices and sometimes the secretarial office is divided again with a corresponding secretary who handles correspondence, meeting notices, etc., and a recording secretary, who keeps the minutes and maintains records. Sometimes the vice-president also serves as program chairperson, and there may be more than one vice-president (with another perhaps in charge of membership). Many clubs also have reporters to handle publicity. Whatever the division of responsibilities, the duties of the officers should be carefully spelled out.

Sometimes these duties are written into the constitution and bylaws, or sometimes in the rules of procedure. When a formal installation is held for new officers, the duties of the officers may be repeated publicly. It is also a good practice to review the duties of each office before elections are held.

Groups sometimes debate the desirability of having nominations for an office come from the floor at a nomination meeting, or made in advance by a specially appointed nomination committee. The committee presents their nominees to the whole group but accepts additional nominations from the floor. Either procedure is acceptable. Generally, the larger the group, the more desirable a nomination committee system is to ensure more careful selection of officers.

Committee appointments

Most organizations have two kinds of committees: *standing committees* (usually named in the bylaws) that continue from year to year and *special committees*, also called *ad hoc committees*, appointed for a special purpose and meeting for a limited period of time (such as a committee to plan a dance).

Just as the responsibilities and duties of officers need to be clearly understood, so a committee's charge needs to be clear. A written charge of what the committee is expected to do is helpful. This is often included in the motion which establishes a special committee.

If committee recommendations are to be brought back to the whole group for approval, which is usually the case, this should also be understood. And if there are any limits to what a committee can do (such as a limitation on how much money it can spend for an orchestra) this should also be made clear at the outset to avoid misunderstanding.

Committees minimally have a chairperson and a recorder, although on a small committee the chairperson may also serve as recorder. However, a committee that holds meetings for any length of time should have minutes kept by a recorder and filed in the committee file to pass on to next year's committee chairperson.

Generally, the larger the organization, the greater the number of committees required. A small club of eight to 15 members may conduct all of its business at its regular meetings with no committees at all. However, in a larger group, committees help get the work done. Meetings of the whole group are often taken up with committee reports and action on committee recommendations. It is a good practice for every member of a club or organization to share in some committee responsibility. Otherwise, those who have no part in the work and decisions are likely to lose enthusiasm for the meetings and the group itself.

Leadership development

An imperative for the continuity of any group is some systematic plan for continuing leadership training or development. This is done in many ways, ranging from an apprentice system, with new officers learning the ropes from former

officers, to special training sessions or conferences conducted for new officers which many national organizations hold.

Perhaps the easiest way to build a leadership development program is to have a rotating system of officers (some juniors and some seniors, for example) so there are always some "new" and some "old" officers. This is usually achieved by staggered terms for offices, with some leaders changing each semester or year while others continue in office.

It is often difficult for clubs when all the officers and active leaders graduate at the same time and leave the group. This throws responsibility back to the adviser, and students may come to think of the group as more the adviser's club than theirs.

Some schools hold officer training conferences for all club officers with special sessions for presidents, secretaries, reporters, etc. Such leadership development programs are very helpful, particularly if part of the conference is devoted to more general information on leadership.

There is a wide variety of leadership resources available through local libraries, including the school library, and from national youth organizations. The problem is not usually finding such material, but wading through it to determine what would best meet your particular needs.

In any case, a program for leadership development pays dividends beyond the immediate needs of a particular club or organization. It provides training that will be helpful throughout the lives of the participants as they continue to assume leadership roles.

III Purpose and Programs:
why groups form and continue

People organize and join groups to accomplish goals they feel are important. Toward this end members are willing to give of their time, energy, money, and talent. Programs are carried on by groups to accomplish the goals and purposes of the group. The word "program" is used here to describe any activity that a group conducts to achieve a particular objective.

Programs need to be developed; they don't just happen, nor do they succeed automatically. You may think of program development as a three-step process: (1) determining goals or objectives; (2) planning the program components; and, (3) evaluating the results.

Group goals

Goals are simply statements of objectives group members wish to accomplish over a period of time. Some may be short-range (this meeting, this month, this semester); some may be long-term goals (this year, the next five years). Sometimes goals are explicitly stated; for example, "to produce a yearbook." Sometimes the goals are very general, "to develop citizenship." But goals are necessary, and the more specific

the goal statement the more likely the goal will be achieved. It is hard to know if you have hit a target if you don't know what the target is!

Perhaps the key question to ask about goals is, "Whose goals are they?" Who decides what should be the goals? Goals developed by the leader, without member input, are unlikely to generate much member enthusiasm. Goals flow out of needs or "reasons," such as the needs of the members themselves, and the needs or "purposes" of the group. The continuing success of any group is closely related to how effectively members are involved in identifying needs and defining goals.

There are various ways groups can involve their members in determining objectives. One method is to develop a survey sheet asking members for "program ideas," perhaps providing a list of program possibilities and asking them to check which they prefer. Or a group may have a meeting for this purpose and divide into small groups to "brainstorm" new ideas that might be appropriate for programs.

Whatever systems are used, the purpose is to find out what the members think, and what they want. And you can't find out unless you ask. Too often, leaders feel they know what the members of the group want, or simply assume that the members want what the leaders want.

Program planning

Probably the worst possible way to develop a program is to take last year's program and change the dates for the following year. That is program repetition, not program planning. Of course, some events or activities may bear repeating, but that should not be assumed.

Rather, program planning begins with the objectives and goals that have been decided on for this year or semester. Activities and program components are selected or developed to accomplish these goals. Every activity finally included in a program should meet these tests: Is this in keeping with our goals? Will this meet the needs of our members?

Other determinations will follow after the particular activities or components are established. *When* will the programs be held? *Where*? *Who* will take care of the details? *How* will it be done? Committees will need to be appointed. Provisions may need to be made for some ongoing contact between the

group leaders and the committees, perhaps asking for progress reports at meetings, or possibly naming an officer to serve ex-officio on the committee. It is often helpful for groups to prepare and distribute to all members a list of the activities or events planned and the committees responsible. This provides information to all and fixes responsibility.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the last step in the program development process. But it is also the first step in the next round of program planning. Determination of *next* year's goals begins with evaluating the results of *last* year's program. What succeeded? Why? What failed? Why? What was only moderately successful? Why? What generated a lot of member enthusiasm? Why? Did the programs and activities of the group meet the needs of the members? Were the goals and purposes of the group accomplished, at least to some degree?

These questions are more easily answered if there are records of last year's programs so planners don't have to rely on memory. Yet adequate records or reports of events or activities are rare in many groups. After the event is over a committee often assumes its job is done, and no final evaluative report is prepared for the whole group. The purpose of such a report is to put on record how the activity was carried out, what was learned from the experience, and how to improve it if it is to be repeated. This prevents each new committee from having to re-invent the wheel. Also, suggestions for improvement while the event is still fresh in the minds of the committee can be of great value compared to the vague memories of "didn't we say we were going to change something?"

Waning effectiveness

The effectiveness of any group can be measured by asking two questions: Is the group accomplishing the goals it set out to accomplish? Are the members satisfied with what is happening? When effectiveness wanes, the group needs to look at these two elements: goal accomplishment and member satisfaction.

Groups have life cycles that can be plotted on a graph as a curve. Most groups increase in effectiveness for a time, then

peak and begin to go downhill, becoming less and less effective. A group may continue for some time at a low level of effectiveness with a lot of energy spent on just maintaining itself as a group. Or, it may re-evaluate what is going on, change its ways, and again move upward in terms of effectiveness.

An analysis of the problem may reveal that the downward slide is a result of too broad a definition of group goals:

- goals were too vague (nobody really knew what the goals meant);
- goals were unrealistic (and thus could not be accomplished);
- or there were too many goals (trying to do too many things so energies were scattered).

The answers to such problems involve redefining goals with members involved in the process, making the goals more specific and more realistic, and setting priorities as to which goals are the most important.

Sometimes an analysis of the problem reveals that members have lost their motivation; they are just not as interested or enthusiastic as they used to be. This situation also calls for goal re-evaluation. Perhaps short-term goals are not related to long-term goals. Or perhaps members' needs have changed and the group has not recognized the change.

There are times when the problem seems to lie outside the group. The goals the group hoped to accomplish have been diverted by unexpected blocks or situational changes. The need is to adapt group goals to the changed situation, or in other cases, to keep the goals in view and not be diverted by some unexpected block.

A common problem when groups begin to go downhill is the displacement of group goals by a new demand; the need to survive. Energy becomes devoted to group maintenance. Sometimes a small subgroup takes over the group. A clique exploits the group to meet only its particular needs, ignoring the needs of the entire membership. The answer lies in focusing on the needs of all members, rather than a few.

A common problem in high school groups is the lack of participation due to competition for the member's time. Family needs, a part-time job, membership in other groups, as well as changing interests lead to low participation. The goals of the

group are superseded by other more important goals members have.

Orderly meetings

It is often said that a meeting is only as good as its agenda. An agenda sets the order of the meeting.

It is sometimes helpful to include time estimates with your agenda or even time limitations for certain discussions. For example, a group may vote to limit discussions on a particular issue to 15 minutes and then, if needed, vote to extend the time. This is helpful to prevent one item from dominating an entire meeting. The whole meeting might have a time limit to be extended beyond that time only by a specific motion.

There is no particular form for a business meeting agenda. It should be designed to best serve the needs of the group. However, an agenda may look something like this:

I Call to Order
II Roll Call
III Minutes of the Previous Meeting
IV Treasurer's Report
V Reports of Committees
  Standing Committees
  Special (ad hoc) Committees
VI Unfinished Business
  (list items if known)
VII New Business
VIII Announcements
IX Adjournment

Most meetings are conducted by parlimentary procedure. Several books are available on the subject,* and it is important for all members to learn how to make and amend motions, how to close discussion in order to bring a matter to a vote, how to table a motion, etc. Experience with parliamentary procedure is excellent preparation for later participation in civic and other groups.

One caution might be noted. Parliamentary procedure was designed for the orderly transaction of business by large assemblies agreeing to abide by majority rule. Some of these

*Available from NASSP Publication Sales are: *Parliamentary Procedure Without Stress*, $3, and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, $9.

procedures may actually impede the progress of small groups that might better operate by consensus.

A helpful and simple modification of parliamentary procedure to promote consensus in small groups is to permit discussion of a subject *before* the motion is made so that the motion reflects the consensus reached through discussion. In strict parliamentary procedure no issue may be discussed (except as a "committee of the whole") without a motion on the floor preceding discussion. The making of a motion before discussing the matter tends to set up "sides" as discussion "for" and "against" the motion continues.

The process of amending a motion is likely to be confusing to many in the group. A modification often practiced to avoid "amendments to the amendment" is called "the friendly amendment." Here changes resulting from further discussion are simply added to the original motion (with the agreement of the original maker of the motion and the person who seconded it).

Between-meeting tasks

There are almost always between-meeting tasks to be done—notices to send, telephone calls to make, information to gather, people to contact, materials to prepare. It is the completion of these between-meeting tasks by group members who take responsibility that provides the links that connect each meeting with the next and provides continuity of the group's purpose.

IV Communication:
who makes decisions

Communication is the oil of all human interaction. When the communication pipelines are open, people understand each other and relationships function smoothly. But when the communication lines are partially closed, relationships are subject to friction as misunderstandings, misperceptions and confusion develop, and communication grinds to a halt. The effect of a communication breakdown on groups is catastrophic since groups can't function without communication among members.

Communication requires a sender and receiver. Both approach the communication act with their particular needs, values, feelings, and perceptions of themselves and of the other. These predispositions may constitute barriers to open communication for the sender, receiver or both. For a communication act to take place a message must be sent by one and received by another either by spoken or written words, or nonverbally with a shrugged shoulder or a knitted brow. A "perfectly clear" message may not be understood because of the tone of voice in which it is said, because the receiver does not "like" the sender, or because of a hundred other reasons.

The skills of communication—speaking, writing, listening—need to be developed by group leaders and members. There are a number of excellent books available on the subject.* This

*Communication and Leadership is available from NASSP Publication Sales for $2.

discussion will focus primarily on the act of decision making; how groups decide what to do and who decides.

First, we need to deal with several widely held myths about decision making and the communications which take place in the process.

Decision-making myths

The first myth to crush is that decision making is something done by the group officers and implementing those decisions is done by members. There are no one-person decisions in a group; every decision eventually involves others. Those expected to carry out the decision really make the crucial decision. They decide whether they will implement or ignore the decision altogether.

Another myth is that decisions are made only by positive action—that is, someone decides. But it should be obvious that to make no decision, to postpone, or to ignore a decision are also decisions.

Another widely held myth is that good information will ensure good decisions. This assumes that decisions are made just on the basis of known facts, but all decisions are made, in part, on the basis of feelings as well.

Frequently, another myth advanced is that the leader of a group should receive special training as a decision maker. Training a leader can certainly be valuable, but it should be directed toward improving the leader's performance as a facilitator or manager of the decision-making process rather than as the decision maker himself. In other words, the leader needs to be skilled in finding ways and means by which others can be involved.

Sometimes it is said there are too many people involved in group decision making and it would be better if fewer participated. Just the reverse is the case. Involvement of others in making decisions may require much more time and attention but group failure to carry out decisions it had no part in making requires even more of the leader's time and attention in the long run. People who are involved in the decision-making process are much more likely to feel responsibility for carrying out decisions that they helped to make.

Decision-making process

The decision-making process has been variously described. Basically it consists of four steps:

- problem recognition and diagnosis;
- search for alternative solutions;
- evaluation of possibilities and selection of a course of action;
- implementation of the decision and evaluation of results.

Decision making takes place within the existing patterns of relationships and expectations, and individual perceptions of events, persons, the organization, and organizational goals. Therefore, the improvement of decision making usually requires special efforts to help the group reach common objectives and roles individuals are expected to perform. Problem areas and issues may need to be clarified. Internal communications may need to be strengthened and working relationships improved at all levels. The group may need practice in improving decision-making skills.

Problem recognition and diagnosis

The first step in making a decision is to define the problem. That seems too obvious. Yet it is not unusual for the decision-making process to break down when the leader or members of the group do not agree on what the problem is. The group feels the problem is one thing, the leader feels it is something else. Or, there is wide disagreement among the members of the group as to the nature of the problem.

For example, one member says, "The problem was the music at the last dance." "No," another says, "the problem was the lack of publicity." "On the contrary," says still another, "the problem was that neighboring school dance the same night." "None of those is the real problem," says the leader, "it's that our members are just losing interest in our club."

When there are differences in defining the problem, it is sometimes helpful to turn the discussion from problems to goals. "What is it we are really trying to do?" "Make money," says one. "Yes, but for what purposes?" the leader asks. Focusing on the goal may result in group identification of the real problem as something different from earlier definitions.

When the group can agree on a goal, attention can be turned to obstacles which stand in the way of its achievement. Identifying obstacles helps state problems. A group, previously differing on the problem, now may agree as a result of defining goals and identifying the obstacles to its attainment.

In any case, once a problem is agreed on, the next step is to ask, why is this? That's the diagnosis that follows problem recognition. What are the reasons, the causes? Sometimes diagnosis may not go beyond a surface look. But the question, "why is this?" needs to be asked over and over again. This questioning should continue until the group is reasonably certain they have arrived at the basic reasons for the problem.

Another part of diagnosis is the gathering of data and information. It is nonsense for a group to argue on the basis of opinion when there are facts available to settle the issue. Arguing about how many attended the last activity, for example, is foolish if attendance figures are available. It is sometimes surprising how much data is available if one seeks it. School offices, community, and governmental agencies frequently have helpful information.

Search for alternative solutions

Once the problem has been defined, clarified, and diagnosed, the next step is the search for solutions, by asking, "what might be done?" It is important at this stage to search for as many alternative solutions as possible. Too often, this search is cut short by the assumption that there are only two or three alternatives available.

Several methods have been developed to ensure a wider search of alternative solutions. One is called "brainstorming" and another is called the nominal group process. Both methods are extensive searches for alternatives that draw upon the creative thinking of the group, and stipulate that no alternative is to be evaluated until as many alternatives as possible have been generated.

Brainstorming is a process of setting a nonjudgmental climate to maximize the generation of ideas by a group. A problem is presented to the group and members are asked to state as many solutions as they can think of without discussion. The invitation might be something like this, "Let's think of as many possible solutions as we can. Don't worry if they sound foolish, or if they really can be done. Let's just generate

ideas." The members of the group then freely throw out ideas without discussing or questioning any of them. Someone makes a list of all the suggestions which are not discussed or evaluated until all ideas have been formulated.

A similar method has been called the nominal group process. As they generate ideas, group members work silently or nominally in the presence of each other. Each individual lists as many possible solutions as he can in 10 minutes. Then in subgroups of five people, with someone acting as recorder, each member reads his solutions aloud, moving in a circle from one member to another. The recorder writes each idea in sequence on a large chart. Later, these ideas are discussed and evaluated.

Both of these methods avoid immediate evaluation of the suggestions. Without this restriction, a member's suggestion may be ridiculed or opposed by another member, cutting off the further sharing of ideas. Postponing evaluation until all ideas have been generated allows for the passage of time which tends to separate the idea from the person who originally thought of it. The idea can then be discussed objectively, without reflection on its originator.

Selecting a plan

After generating as many solutions as possible, the next step is to evaluate the ideas in order to select a course of action.

At the evaluation stage it is usually better to focus on the solutions that most everyone finds acceptable. A positive atmosphere tends to develop when considering acceptable alternatives, while negative feelings may occur when eliminating undesirable solutions.

One of the suggestions for narrowing the range of alternatives suggested by the nominal group process is for all members to "vote" by secret ballot on their five preferred personal choices after all the possibilities have been generally discussed. Rank recording these vote choices yields a list of alternatives for further discussion and evaluation.

As the choices begin to narrow to a particular solution or solutions, two further considerations become paramount: "What will be the consequences of this action?" And, "If this is such a good idea, why haven't we done it before?" These questions are important because both point to the need to deal

with obstacles that would prevent or distort the implementation of the suggested solution. Perhaps the greatest barriers to the successful implementation of new decisions are unanticipated consequences that happen as a result of the new course of action but which no one counted on. "Why hasn't it been done before?" also helps point to particular obstacles to successful implementation that might otherwise be missed.

Implementation and evaluation

Up to this point all effort has been on *deciding*. Once the decision is made, the problem becomes one of implementation. If group members have been involved in the previous stages, implementation is likely to be successful. If the whole process up to now has involved only one or two leaders their problem now becomes "selling" the members.

Successful implementation will require support and encouragement as the new decision is put into effect. Many a generally agreed upon decision has failed to be successfully implemented because members did not receive the crucial support and help they needed during implementation.

Almost as soon as the solution agreed upon is put into effect, evaluation begins. "Is it working? How well is it working? What could be done to improve the results? What modifications appear necessary?" Every decision once implemented should be reviewed continuously for further modification or change based on experience.

Listening: a valuable skill

In many ways the most important communication skill at every stage of decision making is that of listening. Few of us have had any specific training in listening though we have had plenty of training in writing and speaking. Yet we spend *more time* listening than either speaking or writing.

To really listen to what another is saying risks changing our position to agree with his. Often, we "screen out"—don't really hear—what he is saying, particularly if what he says seems to challenge our preconceptions.

Another problem of listening is the fact that we think a great deal faster than we can speak. This "thought-speech differential" accounts for our thoughts wandering off while another is speaking. (We've all experienced this in classes!).

Both these problems point out that we have to teach ourselves to listen. We need to listen to understand what is meant. Often we don't hear the other because we've already decided how we're going to "set him straight" when our turn comes. Rather, we should seek to discover what he means. If we interrupt too quickly we cut off the message. For the moment, we should put aside our own views and opinions, and consciously keep our thoughts on what the speaker is saying. We don't expect him to say what he means in exactly the same words we would use.

One of the ways to practice listening is to sum up what one understands the other person to have said before replying. For example, one might say, "Then you mean. . . ," or "What I hear you saying is. . . ," or "What I understand you're telling me is. . . ." Then, briefly summarize what the other has said. This summary enables each listener to "check-out" if he has heard the other.

V Member Acceptance:
what keeps groups together

Did you ever go to a group meeting and feel like an outsider? Almost everyone has at one time or another. The problem was you didn't feel accepted as a part of the group. How would you complete these statements?

- When I enter a new group I feel _____.
- When people first meet me they _____.
- In a new group situation the first thing I do is _____.
- When I think people don't like me, I _____.
- People like me when I _____.

If five persons were to complete these statements, some of the responses might be strikingly different, but most would be very similar. All the statements deal with acceptance, how we feel about others and how we feel about ourselves.

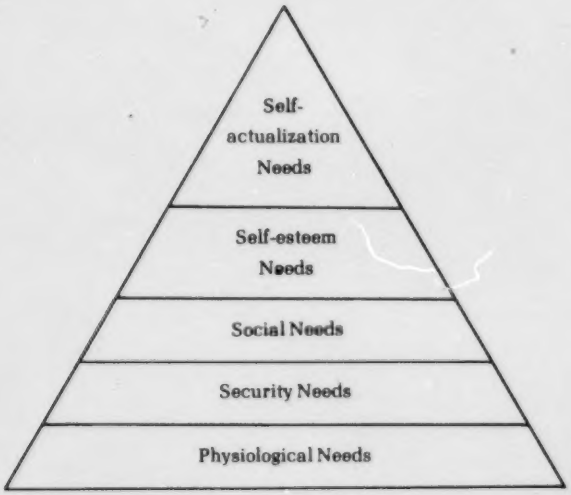
The feelings of each individual are an important part of group experience. Collectively they constitute the group climate—the general feeling or tone that permeates the group and makes us feel comfortable or uncomfortable, welcome or unwelcome, needed or unneeded, valuable or not valuable, worthy or unworthy, satisfied or dissatisfied.

Meeting members' needs

We join and remain in groups because we feel they will meet our social needs. All behavior is need-fulfilling, with needs varying from person to person and across time.

A helpful conception of human needs was developed by Abraham Maslow. He cites five basic needs and arranges them in a hierarchy of fulfillment. Although all five are important, the lower-level needs must be met before higher-level needs are motivated.

The lowest and most basic needs are our *physiological* needs for food, sleep, shelter, activity. These needs are paramount. The next higher level are *security* needs. It is the need to feel secure and safe, confident that physiological needs will be met in the future, that there will be sufficient money, and protection from physical harm. Next are *social* needs. The need to belong is a primary reason people join groups and desire acceptance by others. The *self-esteem* or *ego* need is next in the hierarchy. It concerns one's self-worth and self-confidence and feelings of recognition. At the top of the Maslow pyramid is *self-actualization*; the need for an inner sense of accomplishment or achievement.



Higher-level needs tend to be primary sources of motivation only when needs at lower levels are sufficiently satisfied in each person. For example, our primary concern is for food when we are hungry, but once this need is met, additional food ceases to serve as a motivator.

Task accomplishment behaviors

All those ways in which members behave that contribute to the group so that it can accomplish its purposes and goals are task accomplishment behaviors. Examples of these follow:

Initiating Action	starting the ball rolling, suggesting procedures to follow.
Goal Setting	helping to decide just what should be done and when.
Assessing Resources	considering what resources, i.e., money or expertise, the group has to work with.
Information Seeking	requesting facts or suggestions pertinent to the problem being discussed.
Information Giving	offering facts and providing relevant information.
Summarizing	pulling related ideas together and restating suggestions after group discussion of them.
Elaborating	adding to others' ideas.
Clarifying	carefully and thoughtfully interpreting suggestions to make them more clearly understood.
Testing	"trying out" possible solutions with the group.
Diagnosing	helping to collect and analyze data.
Evaluating	critically questioning courses of action.

Group maintenance behaviors

Group maintenance behaviors include all those ways in which members contribute to strengthen and perpetuate the group. Examples of those behaviors are:

Encouraging	responding to others and being friendly.
Compromising	seeking to resolve conflict by yielding status or admitting error.
Harmonizing	making efforts to reconcile or mediate divergent ideas or points of view.
Gate Keeping	regulating participation by limiting excessive talkers and encouraging others; giving all members a chance to talk.

Few, if any persons are self-actualized all the time. Only at special moments of achievement do we have this "peak experience," but we strive for this, particularly after the lower-level needs are met.

Regulating	helping groups stay on the topic; making "ground rules."
Energizing	stimulating the group to respond and to maintain group cohesion.
Protecting	maintaining group norms and traditions.
Following	going along so the group stays together.
Expressing Group Feeling	speaking on behalf of others in the group.
Consensus Taking	seeking a solution acceptable to all.
Tension Relieving	telling a joke or getting a laugh to relieve tension.

Non-functional behaviors

All behavior of people in groups that do not contribute to group maintenance or task accomplishment is nonfunctional for the group. Examples of these include:

Horsing Around	making efforts to distract other group members with inappropriate behavior.
Blocking	disagreeing with or opposing anything that is brought up.
Seeking Recognition	calling attention to one's self, talking loudly and/or boasting.
Dominating	seeking to take over by subordinating, or downgrading contributions made by other group members, by flattering, or asserting superior status.
Pulling Into One's Shell	refusing to take an active part.
Making Irrelevant Comments	injecting thoughts not in keeping with the topic of discussion.
Self-confessing	using the group to share personal problems and gain sympathy.
Fighting and Competing	aggressive and hostile attempts to "win" one's own way.
Special Interest Pleading	seeking one's interests or those of another outside group.

What members contribute

Part of our need fulfillments are met by belonging and contributing to groups, otherwise groups would not exist at all. Yet, sometimes group leaders (intent on meeting their own

needs) forget about those needs of other group members.

The need-fulfillment behavior of members in any group may be classified in three categories: behavior contributing to group task accomplishment; behavior contributing to group maintenance; or behavior contributing in neither of these ways, but which meet the needs of the individual member. This is called a nonfunctional behavior because it does not contribute to the group, and may be detrimental to the group.

Group pressures

An important determinant of individual behavior in a group is the pressure on members to conform. "You have to be like us to belong" or "You have to be like us to be accepted" are messages members receive. These are usually not spoken but are clearly implied. They are forces that tend to keep group members in line.

Here is an example of how group pressure works: Suppose the group has agreed on a certain course of action, but one member is still holding out; he doesn't agree with other members. In an effort to win his support, group members will make attempts to change the reluctant member's mind.

The first strategy of this final effort is the use of *logic*. Once more all the logical arguments which favor a particular course of action are repeated. If this fails to persuade the holdout, group members will try another strategy—that of appealing to *comaraderie*. "Good old Joe, we know we can count on you." One of these strategies is likely to work, but if they both fail, group members go to strategy three: *attack*. They try to threaten, force, or bully the member into submission. But this probably is a lost cause. It only serves to make his attitude more adamant. The group then moves to its last and final strategy, *amputation*. Group members simply proceed as if the reluctant member no longer exists. One may actually see members move their chairs slightly to exclude the member.

Is it a wonder that members tend to go along with the group?

Needing acceptance

The reason that group attempts to control members so often work is that members desire acceptance. Socially we cry for acceptance, finding security in an "in-group," while our needs for self-esteem must be considered valuable and useful to others. All this helps to hold us in and mold us as a group.

VI Handling Group Conflict:
when disagreements develop

Conflict is inevitable in groups. It is highly unlikely that people can work together for a length of time without some disagreement or problem growing out of differing views.

Conflict always occurs within a context of interdependence in a system of interrelated parts. If the "parties" in the conflict were not interdependent—if the actions of one "party" did not have consequences for the other "party" and vice versa—conflict could not occur. Group members fear conflict because it disrupts the order and output of the group and may even lead to the destruction of the group itself.

There are two basic types of conflict. One grows out of differences in needs and values in each part of a group. One part of a group, for example, may favor one goal while the needs and values of another section may favor another goal. Or the differences may lie not in goals but in the means and methods of moving toward the agreed upon goal.

Another type of conflict grows out of a situation where scarce and undistributable goods are needed to satisfy the needs and values of members. For example, there is a school imposed budget limitation of $100. One part of the group wants to spend it on activity "A" while another part of the group wants to spend it on activity "B."

Conflict strategies

In either type of conflict the ideal resolution has at least two requirements: each party must recognize the right of the other party to provide input to the situation and trust the other; and all parties must attempt to locate realistically and rationally the sources of the conflict, arriving at mutually acceptable solutions.

When conflicts are not dealt with honestly and openly, parties tend to develop progressively negative stereotypes of each other and unrealistic versions of the situation. Both sides become obsessed with their misperceptions and misrepresentations and the battle for each becomes one between the "moral self" and the "diabolical enemy."

There are basically three strategies for dealing with conflict. These may be called: win-lose; lose-lose; and win-win.

These strategies apply whether the problem is an intragroup conflict or intergroup conflict. The effect of the former if unresolved is to break up the group. The effect of the latter is to produce greater group cohesion as the group unites to "slay the enemy." But the long-run impact of intergroup conflict on the larger system is destructive. Warring clubs or rival gangs cannot benefit any school system.

Win-lose

Perhaps the most common conflict strategy is "win-lose." The purpose is for one side to win and the other to lose. Strategic methods are essentially barbaric. If one side is strong enough, it suppresses its opponents who are brought to submission by force. If power is more evenly divided and suppression is not possible, the strategy is *all-out-war*. Fighting continues until victory is achieved by one side; i.e., until the other is ready to surrender or submit. Both methods are common in international relations and at home. Both parties behave as battlers, pursuing their own goals. Both publicly disguise or misrepresent their own desires using methods involving secrecy and surprise against each other, and seeing the other as an enemy to be weakened and destroyed.

Such methods of conflict resolution are not conducive to group harmony, but are common to many a sad tale about groups that used to exist.

Lose-lose

Because the win-lose strategies are so often detrimental and destructive to groups, more civilized strategies have evolved that are used by governments, organizations, and groups. These may be called "lose-lose" strategies. These methods have many similarities to those of win-lose, except both parties know they must continue to co-exist so are willing to compromise. Each gives up something so differences can be settled. In the lose-lose method each party wants to "lose" less than the other.

There are two basic lose-lose strategies. One, *arbitration*, is a method of settling differences by holding a hearing before a third party who determines how much each faction will lose. Virtually all organizations or groups are set up to provide for arbitrary settlement of disputes. Generally, the next higher level of an organization is empowered to settle lower-level disputes by imposing compromises. The more "fair" the arbitrator is, the more likely both sides will feel that he is unfair and that they lost more than they should have.

Another lose-lose strategy is that of *bargaining*. In this system a mutual compromise is reached without imposition by a third party. It is a system of negotiation by which each side equally deprives the other. It is the very old system of "bartering" or "horse-trading." But, as in war strategies, neither side can really be honest or open with the other for fear they will lose too much. Negotiations take on an atmosphere of "them against us" and can easily break down when either side refuses to continue the mutual compromise process. The situation then reverts to limited war, or all-out war.

Win-win

In recent years, largely as a result of the influence of the behavioral sciences and research in group dynamics, a more collaborative strategy has been devised for resolving conflicts. This "win-win" strategy approaches resolution with different assumptions from those previously used. It calls for creative conflict resolution through systematic problem solving or "integrative decision making". Both parties pursue goals they hold in common. They, in effect, say to each other, "I want a solution which achieves your goals and my goals and is acceptable to both of us." The interaction of the parties is one of

openness and trust. Basically they say, "It is our mutual responsibility to be open and honest about facts, opinions, and feelings." Their collaborative behavior is devoted to searching for solutions to the problem. They are more interested in following the decision-making process than having their pet solution accepted. It is as if they say, "I will adhere to the process by which we reach agreement but will not dictate that agreement." In this cooperative activity stereotypes of each side are dropped and ideas are given consideration on their merit regardless of their source. Hostility is not deliberately induced.

The rules governing the strategy are simple: agree on the definition of the problem and goals; agree to search for alternative solutions without evaluating them; and, after all possible ideas have been suggested, evaluate and reach a consensus on the solution.

Of course, this procedure requires the belief that there is a mutually acceptable solution to be found and that finding such a solution is desirable. Although both parties could choose to compete, they choose to cooperate. "Mutual" is the key word here. A win-win strategy cannot work if either side decides to play a win-lose game.

Our general lack of experience with win-win problem solving to conflict resolution means that without conscious effort, we may find this cooperative strategy difficult to implement. But once both sides in a group choose to resolve problems in this way they will be surprised at how quickly conflicts can be resolved.

VII It's Up to You:
making your group effective

In the preceding pages we have suggested, in some detail, factors and dimensions that make for an effective group. But reading about effective groups doesn't make a group effective any more than reading about swimming makes one a swimmer. The principles must be put into practice, become integrated into the behavior of group members and leaders.

In the opening chapter we named four dimensions—purpose, leadership, communication and member acceptance—that must be present to some degree for an effective group. In the succeeding chapters these factors were elaborated. Having an effective group, and recognizing that this is an optimum condition is an end toward which each group reaches.

It's up to you

Whether your group is effective or not depends on you and the kind of member or leader you choose to be. You can take the principles sketched in this monograph, expand on them through further study and practice, and make them your own. You hold the key to the effectiveness of your group, how well it is structured, how clearly understood its purpose, how open its communication, and how warm its acceptance of each member. Whether it succeeds or fails is up to you.